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TOPONYMIC DATA FILES: NATIONAL GAZETTEERS

Dictionaries of the place names of Latvia

Paper submitted by Latvia**

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** Prepared by Zinta Goba.

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DICTIONARIES OF THE PLACE NAMES OF LATVIA

The publication is a review of the dictionaries of place names of Latvia since the first attempts to collect and publish geographical names from the 17-18th centuries up to nowadays. The process of compiling and publishing dictionaries of place names of Latvia is uneven and it could be divided into several periods.

17-18th centuries. Latvian place names in German-Latvian and Latvian-German dictionaries compiled by German clergymen G.Mancelis, J.Langijs, J.Lange, G.Fr.Stenders.

The second part of the 19th century. Latvian place names in the 1st dictionary (Russian-Latvian-German) compiled by Latvian authors K.Valdemārs, A.Spāģis, F.Brīvzemnieks, I.Laube etc. A.Bīlenšteins and his investigation in place names of Latvia. The first attempts of Latvian authors to collect and publish toponyms (R.Dreimanis, K.Kasparsons, A.Lerhs-Puškaitis etc.).

1920.-1940. The establisment and rapid development of Latvian national toponymics. The first dictionaries of the place names of Latvia (J.Endzelīns, J.Plāķis, D.Zemzare etc.).

Toponymic dictionary "Latvijas vietu vārdi" /Place Names of Latvia/(1922.-1925.) compiled by J.Endzelīns, is the first dictionary of the place names of Latvia. It comprises geographical names of the whole territory of Latvia, mostly the names of populated places.Place names are arranged in little administrative territorial units called "pagasti" -civil parishes in the dictionary. The majority of the place names are given in standard Latvian.

The structure of the dictionary "Latvijas vietu vārdi un latviešu pavārdi" /Latvian Placenames and Latvian Surnames/(1936.-1939.) compiled by J.Plāķis, is much like that of the dictionary "Latvijas vietu vārdi" compiled by J.Endzelīns. The main difference lies in the way of recording place names and spelling them in the dictionaries. Place names for the dictionary compiled by J.Plāķis have been written down during expeditions. They are spelt according to the local pronunciation in the dictionary. The first part "Kurzemes vārdi"/Names of Kurland/ was published in 1936, the second part "Zemgales vārdi"/Names of Zemgale/ was published in 1939. The manuscripts of place names of Vidzeme and Latgale meant for publication, have been lost when Latvia was occupied in 1940.

"Stendes vietu vārdi" /Place Names of Stende Civil Parish/(1935.) compiled by K.Draviņš, is the first local dictionary of geographical names of Latvia. It is the first dictionary of Latvia, where one can find toponymic synonyms of place names. In 1940 another local dictionary "Lejasciema novada vietvārdu vārdnīca" /Dictionary of the Place Names of Lejasciems Region/ compiled by D.Zemzare, was published.

"Verzeichnis lettländischer Ortsnamen" (1938.) compiled and published by H.Feldmann, is a German-Latvian and Latvian-German comparative historical toponymic dictionary comprising place names, which have been found in old maps of Latvia.

Index of place names "Alfabētisks Latvijas vietu vārdu saraksts" as an appendix to the map of Latvia scale 1:250 000 was published in 1930. It could be considered to be a toponymic dictionary of Latvia made by cartographers.

The second part of 1940ies - the beginning of 1960ies. The dictionary "Latvijas PSR vietvārdi" /Place Names of the Latvian SSR/(1956.-1961.) is the continuation of the rapid development of Latvian national toponymics in 1920-1940.

"Latvijas PSR vietvārdi" has been compiled at the Institute of Language and Literature, Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR (at present Latvian Language Institute, Academy of Sciences of Latvia) under the guidance of J.Endzelīns. In the dictionary the place names of the whole territory of Latvia have been arranged in alphabetical order. The headwords of this dictionary do not contain a single place name but a family of place names.

The beginning of 1960ies - the middle of 1980ies. The dictionaries of the place names of Latvia published abroad - in Moscow, Stockholm and Wisconsin.

The dictionary "Словарь географических названий Латвийской ССР" /Dictionary of the Place Names of the Latvian SSR/ published in Moscow 1967, was intended as a

normative document, where one can find the most sufficiently used place names of the former Latvian SSR spelt in Russian and in Latvian.

The local toponymic dictionary "Place Names in Kauguri County, Latvia"(1971.) compiled by V.Rūķe-Draviņa, is the first dictionary of Latvian place names published in emigration. It contains an extensive analyses of the place names of Kauguri civil parish, Valmiera district, too. This one was followed by a regional dictionary "Placenames of Latgola" compiled by V.J.Zeps and published in Wisconsin, 1984. It is the only toponymic dictionary of a cultural historical district of Latvia. The dictionary is noteworthy with the numerous references to the toponymic synonyms of a place name in various sources.

The middle of 1980ies - the 90ies. State and regional thematic toponymic dictionaries.

This period is characteristic of more publications in toponymy of Latvia than the previous ones.The majority of them are the dictionaries compiled at the Scientific Laboratory of Regional Geography and Toponymy (up to 1995 - Department of Geography), University of Latvia. All of them are with cartographic supplements. Three dictionaries: "Latvijas PSR ūdenstilpju nosaukumi" /Names of Water Bodies of the Latvian SSR/(1984.), "Latvijas PSR ūdensteču nosaukumi" /Names of Flowing Water Features of the Latvian SSR/(1986.) and "Latvijas upes. Nosaukumi un ģeogrāfiskais izvietojums" /Rivers of Latvia. Names and Geographical Location/(1994.) comprise hydronyms of Latvia. Three other dictionaries "Rīgas rajona fiziski ģeogrāfisko objektu nosaukumu raksturojums"/Description of the Names of Physiogeographical Objects, Rīga District/(1989.) compiled by R.Avotiņa, Z.Goba; "Valkas rajons. Dabas objektu nosaukumu vārdnīca"/Dictionary of the Names of Natural Features. Valka District/(1993.) compiled by J.Kavacs and "Kuldīgas rajons. Dabas objektu nosaukumu vārdnīca"/Dictionary of the Names of Natural Features. Kuldīga District/(1994.) compiled by Z.Goba, comprise the names of natural features of three administrative districts: Rīga, Valka and Kuldīga. The regional toponymic dictionary "Krāslavas rajons. Ģeogrāfisko nosaukumu vārdnīca"/Dictionary of Geographical Names. Krāslava District/ compiled by O.Kovaļevska, is being published. The scientists of the Laboratory of Regional Geography and Toponymy, University of Latvia have founded the tradition to compile and publish toponymic dictionaries of a recommendatory normative character. All the above mentioned are such dictionaries. They should be followed by normative dictionaries.

The dictionary "Latvijas apdzīvoto vietu un to iedzīvotāju nosaukumi"/Names of Populated Places of Latvia and their Residents/(1990.) compiled by philologist V.Dambe, is the only gazetteer of Latvia comprising names of populated places with more than 30 residents.

Dictionary "Liepājas ielas un laukumi"/Streets and Squares of Liepāja/(1989.) compiled at the Museum of History and Arts of Liepāja, is the only gazetteer of urbanonyms in Latvia. It comprises present and historical names of streets and squares of the city.

The second part of the dictionary "Baltisches Historisches Ortslexicon" - "Lettland (Südlivland und Kurland)" was published in Köln and Wien in 1990. It is a German-Latvian historical toponymic dictionary comprising place names found in old maps and written sources. They have been compared with Latvian place names used at present.

In the future the compiling of toponymic dictionaries of Latvia should be developed in two various directions:

1) state toponymic dictionaries (including normative ones) comprising toponyms of the whole territory of Latvia,

2) regional and local toponymic dictionaries. Those dictionaries should include geographical, linguistic and historical aspect of place names.